

CSEPP Policy Paper No.14

DESIGNATION OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AS CORE OBJECTIVE

When CSEPP exercise "core" objectives were originally developed, Public Affairs was not included because it was not deemed to "directly impact" public health and safety. Without being designated a core objective, the Public Affairs function need only be exercised once every four years instead of every year.

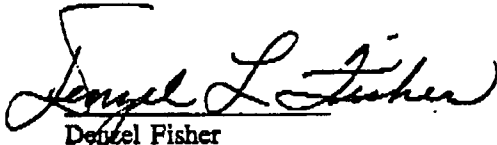
At a March 1996 meeting of Public Affairs Officers involved in CSEPP, a focus group at the Federal, state and local level known as the "Total Assets Working Group" called for exercise Objective No. 9, i.e., Public Affairs, to be designated a core objective. The proposed change was predicated on the fact that Objective 9 captures the gamut of issues relating to expeditious dissemination of critical, emergency information significantly better than any other exercise objective.

Objective 5, which is a designated core objective (the "Alert & Notification" objective), theoretically covered emergency information dissemination, but exercise experience does not support that contention. Objective 5's basic shortcoming is that given the news media's dominant role in disseminating critical, emergency information, sirens (even voice-capable) and Emergency Alert System (EAS) messages are insufficient to properly warn and inform the public. In addition, the consensus of the off-post community - based on exercise experience - is that Objective 9 is generally more effective in driving exercise play than Objective 5.

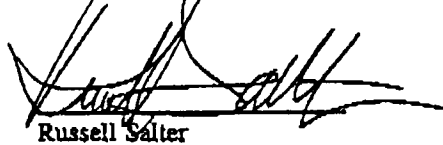
In May 1996, at one of the exercise break-out sessions of the CSEPP national conference, the FEMA Public Affairs Coordinator followed up the focus group's action, requesting concurrence. As a result, the issue was designated an "action" item, meaning that it was slated for formal consideration by the CSEPP Exercise/Training Officer (ETO) working group.

At the December 1996 ETO meeting, following a discussion of the relative merits of changing Objective 9 to a core objective, the change was adopted. *The group also agreed that the change is to become effective as soon as possible after this policy paper is formally promulgated, but no later than January 1, 1998.*

Consequently, effective January 1, 1998, the Public Affairs objective of CSEPP exercise play is designated a core objective. Exercise Co-Directors and others involved in exercise planning are to ensure that this policy is duly reflected in exercise extent-of-play agreements.



Daniel Fisher
Assistant for Environmental
Compliance
Office of the Deputy Assistant
Secretary of the Army for
Environment, Safety and
Occupational Health
U.S. Army



Russell Salter
Acting Chief,
Regulatory Services Coordination Unit
Federal Emergency Management Agency

December 31, 1997
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